

**From:** [Sophie Farrell](#) on behalf of [Simeon Brown \(MIN\)](#)  
**To:** [Councillor Diane Calvert](#)  
**Subject:** RE: CB-COR0339\_transfer request | Concerns about WCC planning, delivery and funding of transport and water infrastructure projects including transparent and effective decision making  
**Date:** Friday, 14 June 2024 12:13:41 pm  
**Attachments:** [image002.png](#)  
[Ministerial response to Councillor Dianne Calvert.pdf](#)

Dear Diane,

Please find attached recent correspondence from Hon Simeon Brown.

Kind regards,



**Office of Hon Simeon Brown**  
Minister of Transport, Minister of Local Government, Minister for Energy, Minister for Auckland  
  
Email: @. Website: [www.Beehive.govt.nz](http://www.Beehive.govt.nz)  
Private Bag 18041, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160, New Zealand

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**From:** Councillor Diane Calvert <[xxxxx.xxxxxx@xxx.xxx.xx](mailto:xxxxx.xxxxxx@xxx.xxx.xx)>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 20, 2024 3:23 PM  
**To:** Christopher Bishop (MIN) <[x.xxxxx@xxxxxxxx.xxx.xx](mailto:x.xxxxx@xxxxxxxx.xxx.xx)>; Simeon Brown (MIN) <[x.xxxxx@xxxxxxxx.xxx.xx](mailto:x.xxxxx@xxxxxxxx.xxx.xx)>  
**Cc:** Nicola Willis (MIN) <[x.xxxxx@xxxxxxxx.xxx.xx](mailto:x.xxxxx@xxxxxxxx.xxx.xx)>; Paul Robinson <[REDACTED]>; Steve Piper <[REDACTED]>; Kirk Hope <[REDACTED]>; [xxxxx.xxxxxx@xxxxxxxx.xxx.xx](mailto:xxxxx.xxxxxx@xxxxxxxx.xxx.xx)  
**Subject:** Concerns about WCC planning, delivery and funding of transport and water infrastructure projects including transparent and effective decision making  
**Importance:** High

Kia ora Ministers

I know that you have both recently clearly expressed that Wellington City Council (WCC) work better with businesses in respect of delivering the Golden Mile transport project (ex LGWM) funded 51% through funding provided by NZTA.

However I and others (both public and elected members) continue to hold concerns about the intention and capability of WCC to deliver this project amongst myriad other piecemeal transport projects and in accordance with Government's direction and funding via NZTA.

I say this because:

1. There is **no integrated plan for all transport routes through the CBD** (despite LGWM having this in their brief for seven years) which WCC has received in part or due to apply for NZTA funding. The concern here is that ratepayer and tax payer funding may not be allocated fairly leaving gold plated designs on one route and sub-optimal design on others. [A new plan for Wellington, post-Let's Get Wellington Moving | The Spinoff](#)
2. There has been **no active engagement with businesses** by WCC along the Golden Mile since the Government made its intentions known to Council in December 2023 and your subsequent "please explain" letter [Government vs Wellington council tensions laid bare in Golden Mile stoush | The Post](#)
3. WCC is **not intending to change its Golden Mile design** in any way other than potentially delay the Lambton Quay portion. It still retains the entire funding of \$141 million in its draft budget [Pg 14](#)
4. WCC officers have recently claimed the **Golden Mile design cannot be altered** because the 51% funding by NZTA will be forfeited (despite potentially some of this funding could be better applied to other CBD transport projects). This seems inconsistent with other WCC advice given that WCC proposes not planning on proceeding with the Hutt Rd portion of the Thorndon Quay/Hutt Rd transport project and seemingly able to adjust the NZTA funding without loss of the entire allocated funding.
5. The construction of the Thorndon Quay/Hutt road multimillion dollar bike lane has been **benefit with issues for businesses** facing disproportionate financial harm
6. Thorndon Quay businesses have recently expressed concerns on the lack of engagement and support by WCC and its contractors despite undertakings made by WCC for the construction phase.
7. At the time of both WCC and NZTA approval of the Golden Mile (\$141 million) and Thorndon Quay/Hutt Rd (\$93.6 million) projects in June/July 2023, **there was no inclusion or mention of the water infrastructure renewal costs** for either routes. Note subsequently the Golden Mile water infrastructure renewal work of an additional \$30 million is now included in its long term plan- [Pg 33](#) and to be funded solely by WCC (removing funding from more critical water infrastructure renewal work elsewhere in the city)
8. WCC officers recently admitted that they did not inform elected members or the public of the **need to replace the water infrastructure under Thorndon Quay** as part of the construction. This renewal work (as at June 2020 the figure was \$10.6 million) is not planned or budgeted for in the Council's draft 10 year plan despite officers admitting that the work will likely need to be completed within five years of the plan (51% funded via NZTA). The yet to be completed work will now need to be ripped up for the water infrastructure renewal work in a few years because of lack of planning and information provided by WCC officers. What a waste of ratepayers and taxpayers funding. [Leaky pipes buried under new \\$55m bus and cycle way that could be ripped up | The Post](#)
9. WCC is proposing to **defer 25% of transport renewals** yet still wants to proceed with new transport projects costing ratepayers even more [Pg 27](#)

A number of elected members including me are supporting both residents and business owners by holding WCC to account for its continuing lack of engagement with impacted businesses, reduced service levels to Wellingtonians and the less than adequate quality delivery of major transport projects [Seven Wellington City councillors sign notice to pause on Golden Mile | The Post](#) This is all against a backdrop of a very fragile overall financial situation facing the city and its ratepayers.

Business owners are also attempting to hold WCC to account. ['A disaster unfolding': Businesses face nine months of Thorndon Quay roadworks | The Post](#) This is not helped by WCC officers seemingly using their resources to minimise, deflect and discredit both business owners and elected members' concerns. [Wellington City councillors, staff clash over alleged meeting ban | The Post](#)

However we need support from Government to ensure the public's broader concerns are addressed and government agencies do not contribute to WCC undertaking projects it cannot afford. This includes more active monitoring by NZTA of funds allocated and ensuring benefits are real, improved monitoring by the Ministry of Transport of NZTA and improved monitoring by Department of Internal Affairs (Local Government) ensuring WCC is acting in good faith in accordance with the Local Government legislation.

In the meantime, both the Government and public would benefit from having an independent observer to ensure information being provided by WCC is both accurate and is not misleading through omission of facts or the timely access to information. The observer (supported by a team) would give assurance to both the Government (including its respective agencies) and the public (residents and business owners) on the quality and delivery of the WCC's engagement practices, its decision making (including the quality of advice provided by officers) and how elected members are able to carry out their duties effectively and unhindered.

I am happy to meet with you along with small business owners to further discuss my concerns and seek a reasonable solution to the issues facing the capital city, its citizens and businesses.

Regards  
Diane

**Councillor Diane Calvert**  
Wellington City Council | Wharangi/Onslow-Western Ward

P [REDACTED]@..... | W [Wellington.govt.nz](http://Wellington.govt.nz) | F [dianecalvertnz](tel:0447222222) | T [dianecalvertnz](tel:0447222222) | W [dianecalvert.nz](mailto:dianecalvert.nz)

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# Hon Simeon Brown

Minister for Energy  
Minister of Local Government  
Minister of Transport  
Minister for Auckland  
Deputy Leader of the House



COR764

Councillor Diane Calvert  
Wellington City Council  
diane.calvert@wcc.govt.nz

Dear Diane,

Thank you for your email of 20 May 2024 to myself and Hon Chris Bishop detailing your concerns about the Wellington City Council (the Council) and its delivery of the Golden Mile transport project.

You have suggested improved monitoring by the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA). As this is an operational matter, I have asked NZTA for advice.

I am advised that a change in the project's scope can be considered after funding is approved. Decreases in funding out of the National Land Transport Fund (also known as surpluses) are easily managed. However, increases in funding will need to comply with the 2024 Government Policy Statement on land transport and will be subject to funding availability.

Councils have discretion over the delivery and funding of all their transport projects. As the Minister of Transport, I am unable to intervene. It is at the Council's discretion on whether or not it will consider rescoping the Golden Mile project to get the best value for money. NZTA is happy to discuss any proposals to change timing or scope of projects with the Council should it wish to do so.

In your letter, you also requested that an Independent observer be appointed. The Local Government Act 2002 (the Act) does give the Minister of Local Government powers to intervene in some circumstances, including appointing a Crown Observer. However, the Act sets a high threshold for intervention by the Minister to be considered. There must be significant or persistent mismanagement or failure of governance on the part of a local authority. This is to preserve local authorities' primary accountability to their ratepayers and communities. It is not clear to me that there is sufficient evidence to warrant Ministerial intervention in this case.

Thank you again for writing.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S B' followed by a long horizontal stroke.

Hon Simeon Brown  
**Minister of Local Government**  
**Minister of Transport**